

SAFETY ALERT

GREAT BASIN FIRE BEHAVIOR

08/18/2000

WARNING

High winds associated with a strong dry cold front moving westerly across the Northern Rockies and Great Basin are predicted for Friday, Saturday, and Sunday August 18-20. Winds are predicted to be 15-20 mph gusting to 30 mph. Over high-mountain ridges gusts up to 50 mph can occur. These winds will create extreme fire behavior and will stimulate **large crown fire events**. Fires could move as much as 2-4 miles per hour. Very long range spotting will occur.

It is imperative all strategy and tactics including initial attack take this into account. Long range spotting can easily trap firefighters! The most prudent action may be to back off and wait for the winds to subside. It is of utmost importance that structure protection actions not put firefighters at risk. **DO NOT** rely on air support, as winds will likely curtail all aviation activity. Blowing dust and hot ash will create additional hazards for firefighters on the line and for driving.

After passage of the front, the wind is likely to shift 90 degrees and existing flanks will become the new head of fires. This should be anticipated in planning suppression actions during and after the wind event.

Ensure all line personnel are adequately briefed on the seriousness of this event. Know where all personnel are at all times. Consider camp locations and the potential need for evacuations.

LOOKOUTS; COMMUNICATIONS; ESCAPE ROUTES; AND SAFETY ZONES!